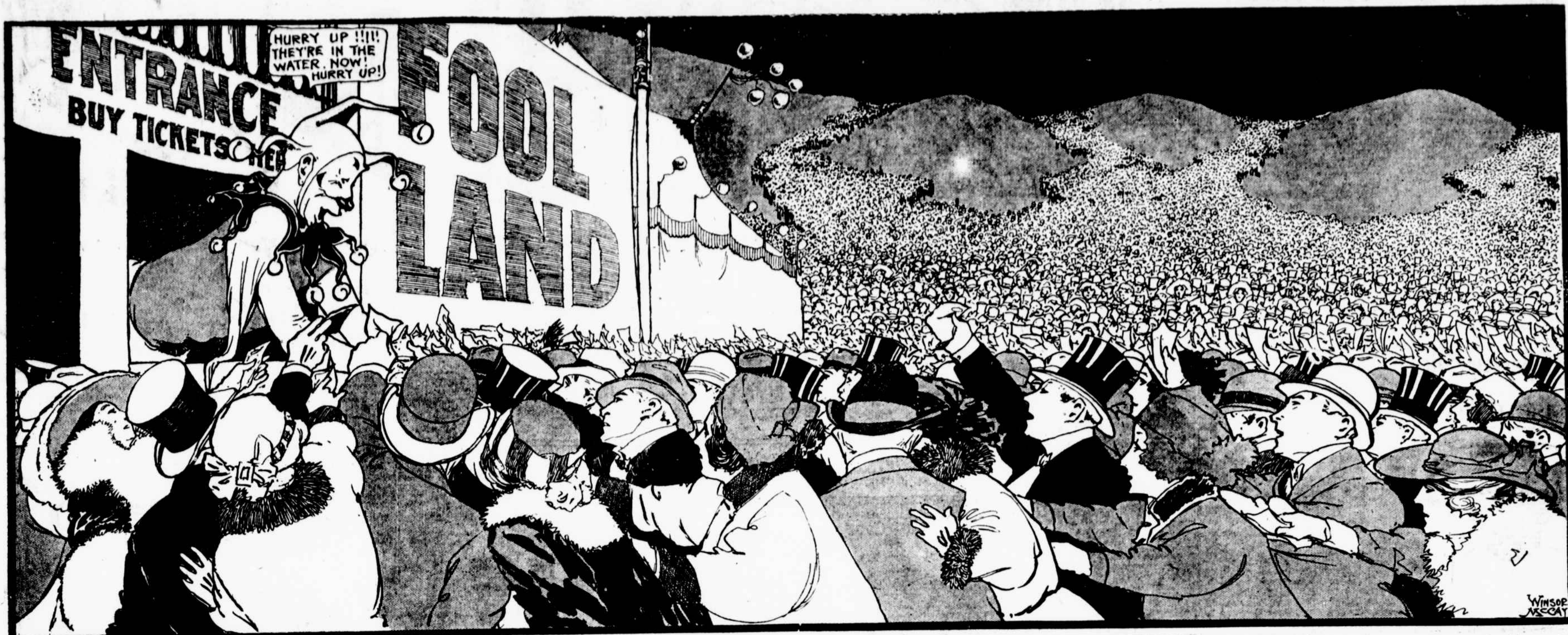


All Aboard for Fool Land

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HAVING endured all she could endure — no one knows just what bitterness it was that pulled the trigger, Mrs. Clara Smith Hamon killed the man with whom she lived. It may have been that he tired of her and let her know—very dangerous. It may have been that she ended HIM, hoping to end disgust with HERSELF. Not probable, for women usually kill themselves under such circumstances.

What really happened only the recording angel knows or ever will know. Murder trials prove nothing, except what the jury thinks about killing or sparing some particular killer.

But, convicted or acquitted, Clara Smith Hamon may call herself useful. She wrote in her famous diary a few lines that ought to teach millions, and that **WOULD** teach and warn, if human beings could be warned or taught by the misfortunes of others.

Not blaming the man alone, not sparing herself, Mrs. Hamon told her diary that remorse and regret could do no good, just as knowing of her folly in advance could not save her. These are her words on which Mr. McCay's cartoon is based: **"I KNEW ALL THAT I KNOW NOW WHEN I TOOK MY TICKET FOR FOOL LAND."**

Here is part of Mr. McCay's comment on his own cartoon:

"The barker stands at the door of his tent, yelling: 'Step up, step up; come on, men; they're in the water NOW.'"

"Folly, selling tickets to Fool Land, is the most successful barker and ticket seller in all history. He began his ticket selling with the first man. He will keep on selling tickets while there are any men and women left."

"He sold a ticket to the first cave dweller that went deliberately into the wrong cave, found the other man home, and lost his life."

"He sold a ticket to Marc Antony, when he flung away glory, Rome and as good a wife as a man ever had, to travel with Cleopatra in Fool Land."

"Folly sold a ticket to the Germa Emperor, when he decided to provide a separate throne, 'newly carpeted,' for each of his many sons. Now none of them has **ANYTHING** but memories, one is a suicide and their father's ticket for Fool Land has landed him in Holland and oblivion."

That is one extract from McCay's memorandum at-

The crowd is big, the tickets are ready and cheap, the door to Fool Land is always open. For every kind of fool there is a special compartment.

The show never stops---al-

tached to this picture. You shall read another.

From all over the world travelers gather to get their Fool Land tickets. The man who **HAS** money goes to Fool Land and spends it. His ticket lasts only as long as his money. Then he comes home to the land of dull reality, and, like Mrs. Hamon, he says to himself: "I knew all that I know **NOW** when I bought that Fool Land ticket."

The man with little or no money buys his ticket for the Land of Folly. There he gambles, with what little he has and needs, or with money that he has not.

His ticket expires, when his gambling folly ends, for lack of ammunition. He comes back to remorse, hatred of himself. And often, in prison, he tells himself that he knew all about it before he bought the ticket.

The worst of our strange natures is that we are like flies lighting on the sticky paper. We see the others wriggling, striving, dying or dead, and still we say: "Oh, that fly paper is not sticky enough to hold **ME**. I'll just step on and step off again." We buy a Fool Land ticket, "step on," and there is no stepping off.

"A fool is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason."

No fool ever feels wiser, more self-complacent, than when he gets his ticket to the land of his fellows.

One man is a fool about women. He tells himself, "Other men have harmless amusement; I must have it." He buys his ticket, and little knows what the price is when he buys it. Hamon, out in Oklahoma, who recently felt a bullet strike him, and then felt nothing, was probably quite satisfied with his Fool Land journey, until it ended suddenly. He did what he could at the last, by refusing to tell who had killed him, pretending that he had shot himself. He was a game fool, as his friends put it, but nevertheless a traveller in the land of those that will not learn.

When stock exchanges, gambling houses, race tracks, close and night settles down, ghosts gather

though the fool does stop, at death. There are as many kinds of fools as there are kinds of vice, folly and weakness. All kinds are welcome in the "Land", a place is prepared for each.

about the closed doors. Men that had bet a life's work and a family's happiness on a race horse, a card or a financier's word of honor meet to wonder why they did it. Clerks that stole to fatten gamblers come back to wonder why they could not let others' sorrows warn them.

Divorce courts, dives and the striving for social recognition based on extravagance or toadyism are all entrances to Fool Land, and all crowded.

Here is another extract from Mr. McCay's memorandum, sent with his picture of Fool Land.

"Tell young men, **ESPECIALLY**, that this picture is for them. For one girl fool there are ten fool men. Not one, of course, would buy his ticket of the barker with his cap and bells, the traditional fool, as I have drawn him. Not one would be found in the crowd headed for Fool Land if it were labelled in big letters **'FOOL LAND'**, as I have labelled it here."

Yet every fool land **IS** labelled, and most plainly. Thousands of young men, every day, enter a Land of Fools labelled "You can't afford it." Other thousands day after day pass under the sign: "This land and its drink are poisons; only fools come here."

Young men go to Fool Land and ruin, not because they don't **KNOW**, but because they don't **CARE**, or think they don't care. They care enough when they come to realize how easy it is to get in and how hard to get out.

For instance, to-day, all whiskey sold now is poisonous, and much of it is deadly poison, actually capable of producing blindness and death in a few hours. Yet fools buy and drink it, and may of them from mere curiosity, lacking even the excuse of confirmed, hopeless habit that kills the will.

Curiosity lures many to Fool Land, weakness makes others drift, bad heredity pushes on a few, but very few. And even they know where they are going and **COULD** stop.

You see a mouse caught in a trap, its neck squeezed down and broken by the vicious spring above the cheese, and you feel sorry for the little creature.

You would despise its stupidity, if told that the mouse knew the spring was there, had actually seen

his brothers, dead in the same trap, and still went in.

The traps for fools, from wood alcohol to designing, vicious schemers, are all **LABELLED**: "This is a trap for fools." But the fools go in. They have less sense than mice.

Sometimes you are tempted to believe that Fool Land is a great sieve, in which what is not worth while among us is cast aside to make room for others.

There is a Fool Land for the idle, biggest land of all. It holds those that miss their chance, and pass through the world without being **PART** of it.

There is a smaller Fool Land for those that work too much, never lifting their noses from the grindstone, going through the world without ever seeing it. But there are few of them. Theirs is a small pasture.

Fortunately, not all travelers to Fool Land are the same.

Some enter, like it, stay, never want to leave. They are hopeless and incurable. Others know where they are, and **WHAT** they are, but wander about in Fool Land, not knowing how to get out. Pity them, there are many of them.

A third class, and luckily the largest class, enter Fool Land by the front gate, pass through rapidly and go out the other side to life and work worth while.

Many know Fool Land by experience, have been there and escaped.

These tell of their experience, as Dante told of his trip through Hell. He described the biting snakes, boiling pitch, roaring flames, prodding devils in a way to make anyone behave, you would say. But Dante's story did not diminish the number of Satan's visitors. They are still passing below the sign "Leave Hope Behind."

So with returning travelers from Fool Land, the men that were **ALMOST** ruined forever, etc. They tell their tale; no one listens.

The ticket seller in this picture has his assistants drumming up trade for him, and sometimes these men and women that increase the sale of Fool Land tickets are eminently respectable.

They are excuse-making fools that say: "A young man must have his fling." Or they say: "A young man is all the better for sowing his wild oats." Any doctor can tell the young man that he will regret taking **THAT** advice.

Fool Land is crowded because few listen to others, curiosity draws millions as light draws moths, youth often lacks purpose, and folly is **FALSE** purpose.

See the crowd, hear the barker shouting: "Hurry, get your ticket." But **YOU** need not hurry and **YOU** need not get your ticket. Leave Fool Land to the Fools. You know **NOW** all that it can teach you.